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PPB 69-1228

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger,
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Pending Issue in the Agency's FY 1971
Budget

1. I understand that the Bureau of the Budget in the next several days will be seeking the President's approval of the CIA budget for FY 1971. We have no major problems with the Bureau's proposals insofar as they are concerned with Agency programs. At issue, however, is one program largely funded by DOD but which requires some Agency resources as well. This is the IDEALIST (U-2) reconnaissance activity.

2. The Bureau of the Budget will recommend cancellation of Agency resources for IDEALIST on grounds that the program should be eliminated from the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP). I realize that the final decision on the NRP budget will not be made until some time later this month, but I wanted to give you my views in the interim.

3. The IDEALIST program provides a means of mounting low-cost, covert photo-reconnaissance flights by the improved U-2's in times of crisis or in areas where cloud-cover inhibits satellite coverage. These new models of the U-2 can react rapidly to

NRO review(s) completed.

USAF review(s) completed.



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25X1 , world-wide contingencies and have a high expected survivability over China and most other potential crisis areas. [redacted]

[redacted] This program is an important and unique asset which I hope we can continue. Pursuant to this, at the last NRP Executive Committee meeting, Dave Packard and I agreed to put this issue to the 303 Committee and papers are in preparation. The issue of whether or not to maintain this covert overflight capability seems clearly to be a matter for policy decision by the President. Accordingly, I recommend that the budgetary decision on IDEALIST be deferred until the 303 Committee can make its review.

4. As an attachment, I am including a separate page with additional elaboration on the IDEALIST program.

signed
Richard Helms
Director *11 dec 69*

Attachment
IDEALIST Program

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ATTACHMENT

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IDEALIST (U-2) PROGRAM

The Agency U-2 program provides the U.S. a flexible, covert overhead reconnaissance system with unique capabilities for high resolution [] photography, [] The system can react rapidly to world-wide crisis situations cheaply, effectively, and without attribution to direct U.S. Government sponsorship, especially when third-country bases [] are used. (We have agreements for joint operations [] and the []) The U-2's can be deployed on short notice, with a reaction time of about 50 hours, anywhere in the world. The U-2 can operate from carriers as well as from land bases.

The new (U-2R) model now in service has significantly improved survivability, and operational, collection, [] capabilities over previous U-2's.

Over the years since its advent in 1956, the Agency U-2's have provided, at one time or another, significant intelligence pertaining to the USSR, Eastern Europe, Communist China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba. They have been used to monitor trouble-spots, such as the Middle East, Indonesia, and the Sino-Indian border areas during the fighting there in 1963 and 1964. Other areas which have been covered include the Sino-Burmese border area, Cambodia, and Thailand (the latter for mapping purposes at the request of the Thais)

[] This program provides the U.S. Government with a low-cost option for meeting future crisis situations in areas other than the very heavily defended areas of the Soviet Union. During non-crisis periods this asset can be used to collect Chinese Communist intelligence (particularly in areas where cloud-cover inhibits satellite coverage). Because the U-2 is the [] only real reconnaissance vehicle for operating over large areas of the China mainland, it is an asset of great strategic importance [] Precipitant withdrawal of the U-2 unit would have serious impact on political relationships between the U.S. and the [] A further consideration is the fact that the U-2 program helps to insure [] cooperation with us in maintaining other intelligence programs of vital concern to the U.S. It also permits us to stay well-informed of the various intelligence activities of the []

The program assets (airplanes, major equipment, and facilities) are now paid for. The Agency program as now envisioned is projected to cost approximately [] million per year, including NRO and CIA funds.

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